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THE CAMPAIGN
OF
CHANCELLORSVILLE

[APRIL 27—MAY 5, 1863]

By MAJOR JOHN BIGELOW, Jr., U. S. A.

A CRITICAL REVIEW

Reprinted by permission from
THE SUN of November 6th, 13th and 20th, 1910

BY
JAMES HARRISON WILSON

LATE MAJOR GEN'L U. S. V.

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Jas. H. Wilson

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The entire Truth at Last about the Campaign of Chancellorsville.

Nearly half a century having elapsed since the close of the War of Secession, it may well be claimed that the time has come for the critical study of the strategy and tactics, of the character and qualifications of the principal generals and of the plans and policies of the opposing sides in that titanic struggle. Many histories and biographies have been written and published and much technical criticism has been given to the world, but *The Campaign of Chancellorsville*,* by JOHN BIGELOW, JR., a retired major and graduate of West Point who served a term as professor of military science and tactics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is by far the most minute and careful military work which has yet been given to the country. It contains maps and plans which are numerous and fairly accurate, but owing to their number and to the varying scale are not always as easy to follow as they should be.

While this ponderous volume requires most careful reading and is primarily intended for the army officer and the historical student, it will well repay

**The Campaign of Chancellorsville*, a strategic and tactical study by John Bigelow, Jr. Maj. U. S. Army, retired, (author of *Mars la Tour* and *Gravelotte*, the *Principles of Strategy*, and *Reminiscences of the Santiago Campaign*.) with Maps and Plans. New Haven Yale University Press, 1910

the general reader for all the time and trouble he expends upon it. It is divided into "The Period of Preparation" and "The Period of Operation." It describes the point of view and throws much light on the conduct and character of the opposing commanders. It gives the organization and number of the opposing forces in great detail from the most trustworthy sources and makes it plain that Hooker's army at all the stages of the campaign outnumbered Lee's about two to one. It clearly describes Hooker's turning movement by the right flank behind the Rappahannock, the passage of that river and of the Rapidan, the marching and fighting through the Wilderness to Chancellorsville, Jackson's turning movement against Hooker's right flank and rear, the gross negligence of Hooker and Howard, Sedgwick's passage of the Rappahannock to the left, his tardy capture of Fredericksburg, his successful assault of Marye's Heights and his delayed advance along the highway from Fredericksburg to Chancellorsville against Lee's right, his abortive attack and repulse at Salem Church, and finally his hasty and unnecessary retreat to the north side of the Rappahannock by Scott's Ford.

The author makes it clear that in all the fighting from Wilderness Tavern to Fredericksburg, fifteen miles apart, Lee from his central position was everywhere and at all times victorious, and that with the single exception of Marye's Heights and here and there a gallant charge by a brigade or regimental

commander, Hooker and his generals were everywhere defeated. It is a dismal and humiliating chapter in which vanity, boasting and incompetency led our armies through the violation of all true military principles to disgrace and defeat.

The author correctly points out that the four months which followed Hooker's disgraceful and overwhelming disaster at Chancellorsville and ended with Meade's partial victory over Lee at Gettysburg were the darkest in our military history. For had Lee's victory south of the Rapidan been followed by one north of the Potomac, as he had every reason to hope, it is now certain that England and most of the Continental countries would at once have recognized the independence of the Southern Confederacy. While it does not necessarily follow that this would have compelled Lincoln's Administration to do likewise, it would have greatly discouraged the National Government and compelled it to put forth greater efforts than ever to fill the ranks of the army and to make a still closer blockade of the entire southern coast.

In order to understand the general features of the campaign and the gravity of the situation which followed we must briefly analyze the author's work.

I.

The theatre of operations lay south and west of the Rappahannock River, from 150 to 300 feet wide, between fifty and sixty miles from Washington.

Hooker's headquarters were at Falmouth, opposite the old town of Fredericksburg, while his immediate base was twelve miles northeast, near the junction of the Aquia Creek with the Potomac, where it was amply protected by a naval flotilla. Of course most of his supplies were brought to that place by water and forwarded by rail and wagon to the army in the field.

The entire region north of Rapidan Station on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad and the Rapidan River to its junction with the Rappahannock near Hartwood Church was under the effective occupation or control of the national forces. The distance from Falmouth to Rapidan Station by the country roads is about forty-five miles, or two forced marches for fresh troops.

Hooker's army was massed about Falmouth, with pickets and detachments keeping close watch on the line of the river from Rappahannock Station to the mouth of the Massaponax, about five miles below Fredericksburg. The entire distance thus covered, cutting off the bends of the river, was about thirty-six miles. Hooker's force consisted of seven army corps of infantry, one of cavalry and seventy-one batteries, containing in all 413 guns, with a total officers and men present for duty on March 31, 1863, of 136,724, or not far from the strength of Napoleon's army in the Waterloo campaign. Every army corps commander except Sickles was a trained soldier and graduate of West Point, and the same would have been true of the

entire staff except aides-de-camp had Hooker not been compelled to substitute Butterfield for Stone, who was his first and far better choice for chief.

Hooker himself was a graduate of West Point who had left the army after a few years of inconspicuous service and in civil life had tasted the sweet oil of experience and the vinegar of a checkered career. He was an exceedingly handsome man in the prime of life who had had the vanity and effrontry after the battle of Bull Run to say to the President: "I am a damned sight better general than any you had on that field!" While in some way which history fails to account for satisfactorily, he had gained the sobriquet of Fighting Joe Hooker, this was commonly regarded by those who knew him best as but poorly deserved. While the author evidently had not heard, it is personally known to the writer that after Hooker was slightly wounded in the sole of his foot at Antietam and his corps had practically disappeared from the line of battle he was advised and besought to return in an ambulance, or better still, on a stretcher with his battle flag to the fighting line and thus rally his corps and not only save the day but perhaps the country as well. He positively refused to do so on the ground that he was too badly hurt, and yet he retired to Washington, where he walked on the wounded foot within ten days. When this conduct is compared with that of General Thomas J. Wood, who received in one of the Western battles a much more serious wound in the heel and continued on duty throughout the campaign, or with that of

General Emory Upton, who was badly wounded by a fragment of a shell in the thigh at the battle of Winchester and although positively ordered by Sheridan to the rear not only refused to go but after his surgeon had stanchd his wound with a tourniquet actually had himself carried about the field on a stretcher till the victory was won, it will be seen that Hooker had but comparatively little of that fortitude and still less of that aggressive temper which should have gone with his sobriquet.

The simple fact is that he showed himself on many occasions to be a swashbuckler and a braggart; and while that class frequently contains men of courage and daring they generally have but little of the talents and less of the character which should be found in a general commanding a great army. The curious reader will find ample evidence in the volume under consideration not only to justify this conclusion but to show that both Hooker's strategy and tactics were bad, that his plans were crudely conceived and poorly executed at every stage of the campaign, that his orders were fragmentary, verbose and difficult to understand, that his army was divided and scattered at the outstart in violation of the fundamental principles of strategy and that Hooker himself at the crucial hour lost his head, not because he was drunk or disabled, as has been commonly supposed for many years, but because of personal demoralization and lack of effective leadership in the presence of the enemy, which his army outnumbered two to one. It

is said that he afterwards declared he was not afraid of Lee or his army, but "had lost faith in Hooker."

II.

Lee's Army of Northern Virginia consisted of two corps or eight divisions of infantry, one corps or two divisions of cavalry and fifty-five batteries, generally of four guns each, or 220 pieces in all. His total strength present for duty on March 31 was returned at 64,799 men, or less than half the force by which he was confronted.

This army, with its centre and the greater part of its strength at or near Fredericksburg, held the line of the Rappahannock from Rappahannock Station by the way of Fredericksburg southeastward to Port Tobacco, with a front of about forty-five miles. But it should be noted that the region between the Rapidan, the Rappahannock and the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, from ten to fifteen miles wide, was a sort of neutral zone separating the two armies and was weakly held by Lee's cavalry. Lee's headquarters were between a mile and a half and two miles southwest of Fredericksburg. His only line of supplies was by the railroad from Fredericksburg to Richmond, about fifty miles away, while his principal depot and artillery park were at Guinea Station, between twelve and thirteen miles from Fredericksburg, or about the same distance that Hooker's depots at Aquia Creek were from him. In other words, the two armies were

equally distant from their principal depots and respective capitals, occupied about the same front, were separated by a considerable river, with wide bottoms and commanding bluffs. The only difference was that Hooker's line of supplies to his base, was by a broad river which could not be cut or obstructed, while Lee's was entirely by a poorly constructed railroad, with many wooden bridges that could be easily destroyed. In this important respect the advantage was greatly in favor of Hooker.

But Lee had a countervailing advantage of which Hooker had no conception, or at least took no account. It lay in the fact that Fredericksburg, covered to the front by the deep valley of the Rappahannock and to the rear by Marye's Heights, had been the scene of earlier operations disastrous to the Federal arms and was susceptible of effective defence at all important points. This strongly fortified camp was destined so to separate and delay that part of Hooker's army under Sedgwick, amounting to three army corps at first and to one army corps and one division later, as to give Lee ample time to throw Jackson against the right flank and rear of Hooker's overconfident but headless army and after driving it back in confusion on Chancellorsville, to turn his victorious divisions upon Sedgwick at Salem Church, about midway between Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg, and not only to defeat and cut him off from the latter place but to drive him from the turnpike two miles northward to the Rappahannock at Scott's Ford.

While the author dwells but little on this important episode and Sedgwick has been overpraised for the capture of Marye's Heights, there can be but little doubt that Sedgwick's failure to reach Chancellorsville and his delay in reaching even Salem Church were due mainly to the insufficiency of his force after the departure of the First Corps and to the natural difficulties, the river, the heights and the broken country, as well as to the fortifications which lay across his route.

Hooker, after the campaign, censured Sedgwick severely for his caution and slowness, and there can be little doubt that Sedgwick, although brave and loyal, was both cautious and slow. While Hooker should have anticipated this, there can be but little doubt that the obstacles Sedgwick encountered in crossing the river, capturing Marye's Heights and advancing on Chancellorsville were such as to make it practically impossible for him to reach the scene of the greater battle in time to attack Lee in the rear while Lee was attacking Hooker's main army in front. But for this unfortunate state of affairs following the strategic blunder which brought it about, it would have been possible from the first, notwithstanding the overwhelming disaster to his right wing under the weak and unfortunate Howard, for Hooker to resume the offensive and throw his vastly superior force upon Lee's tired divisions and by weight of numbers and "mere attrition" if nothing else to gain a substantial victory. Even as it was, Sedgwick's retreat from

Salem Church to Scott's Ford reunited him with Hooker and put it in the power of that commander, had he been a soldier of unshaken resolution and courage, with his superior numbers, many of whom had not fired a shot and a majority of whose corps commanders voted in favor of holding their ground if not of assuming the offensive, to "spring" upon the enemy, nearly all of whom had been constantly engaged in marching and fighting for six days. According to all accounts the result of such a counter stroke as this could hardly have been doubtful, but to the disgrace of the nation and its army the weak, incompetent and demoralized Hooker was not the man to make it.

III.

In order that the conclusion of the foregoing section may be more clearly understood certain interesting facts should be noted in regard to the composition of the two armies. From the official figures it appears that while both armies were commanded by West Pointers, only 71 per cent. of the Federal as against all of the Confederate corps commanders were West Pointers. It also appears that 63 per cent. of the Federal division commanders and 32 per cent. of the brigade commanders were West Pointers, as against 83 per cent. and 18 per cent. of the Confederate division and brigade commanders. But counting corps, division and brigade commanders of both armies the percentages of West Pointers were respectively 42

and 31. Thus it will be seen that so far as trained officers in the higher grades were concerned the advantage rested decidedly with the Confederates, while in the lower it rested quite as decidedly with the Federals.

Another and still more curious fact is that while the rank and file of the Army of the Potomac contained only 82 per cent. of natives the Army of Northern Virginia contained 97 per cent. In other words, the former had 18 per cent. of foreigners (largely in the Eleventh Corps), while the latter had only 3 per cent.

The author gives many other interesting figures which cannot be repeated in detail, but they show to the surprise of many that although the Army of Northern Virginia had all told only 109,859, the ratio of sickness, the ratio of absent with and without leave and the ratio of those undergoing punishment were smaller in the Federal Army than in the Confederate, while the number of special extra or daily duty men was greater in the former than in the latter.

The inference to be drawn from all this is that notwithstanding Lee's army was better commanded, had a simpler and better organization and a larger percentage of native born soldiers, Hooker's army had enough West Point officers and native born soldiers left to overwhelm Lee, even after the Eleventh Corps with its large proportion of foreign born officers and men had been imprudently assigned to the right of the line and been driven in disgraceful panic from the field.

IV.

After an inefficacious demonstration by Stoneman's cavalry, strongly supported by infantry, against the enemy's extreme northeastern outpost at Rappahannock Station early in February, Hooker's effective strength was reduced by orders from Washington detaching the Ninth Army Corps of about 15,000 men to re-enforce Dix at Fort Monroe. This blunder, which is directly traceable to Halleck, was followed by a corresponding blunder on the part of Lee detaching about the same number of men but a much larger proportion of his whole strength, to Longstreet at or south of Richmond, to confront what he conceived might be the forerunner of a great turning movement to the James River. Both detachments, it should be observed, were in violation of the fundamental principles of strategy, but while 50,995 Federal soldiers were neutralized between Hooker and Dix, who were powerless to re-enforce each other without permission or orders from Washington, 43,239 Confederates included in the single command of the all-powerful Lee, were free to move by the shortest possible railway to re-enforce any part of the common line from the Rappahannock to Petersburg without let or hindrance of the Confederate authorities in Richmond. In short, Lee had all the advantages of what strategists call interior lines, while Hooker had the disadvantage not only of divided command but of exterior lines and of a slower transfer by water.

While the winter of that latitude was compara-

tively open, the opposing armies and commanders confined themselves for the month of March and most of April to cavalry operations and outpost affairs which inflicted no serious injury on either side and were principally notable because they called forth in an interview between Hooker and his subordinate, Averell, the sarcastic question, "Who ever saw a dead cavalryman?" While Hooker's cavalry corps contained between twelve and thirteen thousand men and horses present for duty, the proportion of this arm to the infantry was far below what experience later taught it should have been. Lee's cavalry amounted to about 4,138 effectives, but the proportion of mounted men of Lee's army was much larger than in the Army of the Potomac.

On March 17 the inconclusive cavalry engagement at Kelly's Ford resulted in the defeat of Averell by Fitzhugh Lee, but so far as beneficial results to either party were concerned the engagement had better have been avoided entirely. It led to nothing more serious than a chaffing correspondence between Averell and Fitzhugh Lee, who had been acquaintances and comrades in the old army.

The season of idleness which preceded his advance was well employed by Hooker at least in perfecting the organization of his forces and in the preparation to strike an effective blow, the object of which should "not be Richmond but the defeat or scattering of Lee's army which threatened Washington and the line of the upper Potomac." The instructions from

Washington, made up mostly of hints and suggestions, contained but two positive directions:

That the Army of the Potomac shall assume the offensive without any unnecessary delay.

That it shall not uncover Washington.

Subject to these reasonable limitations, Hooker was entirely free to plan and direct the operations of his army according to his own ideas. The narrative shows that Hooker first thought of turning Lee's right flank and forcing his army from the Richmond and Fredericksburg Railroad, which if successful, would compel him to retreat toward Gordonsville and thus uncover Richmond.

Hooker spent March 11 at Washington in conference with the President, the Secretary of War, the General in Chief, and the Committee on the Conduct of War, but just what took place or just what was decided upon between him and the Government remains unknown to this day. It seems certain, however, that Hooker returned to his army confident of hearty co-operation on the part of the Washington authorities and fixed in the determination that so far as he was concerned "there should be no more mistakes or doubtful results." "If the enemy does not run," said that boastful commander, "God help them." Later he declared: "I have the finest army the sun ever shone on. I can march this army to New Orleans. My plans are perfect, and when I start to carry them out may God have mercy on General Lee, for I will have none." But this vainglorious confidence simply confirmed the

Washington authorities in the desire "that a blow should be struck by the Army of the Potomac as early as practicable," and this desire, influenced by the fact that a number of volunteer regiments would have filled their term of enlistment and be ready for muster out in the course of the spring, caused the authorities to urge upon Hooker as early an advance as practicable.

In forming his general plan of operations Hooker wisely concluded that it was impossible to assail the enemy in front, where he was strongly fortified along the heights overlooking Fredericksburg, and that the passage of the river south and east of that place would require too many feet of bridging, too many pontoon trains and too long a march over bad roads through a broken and wooded country, and furthermore that a movement in that direction would uncover Washington and thus violate one of the fundamental conditions imposed upon him by the Washington authorities. He was thus forced to move by his right flank and by a passage of both the Rappahannock and the Rapidan to place his army in a position south of the latter stream from which he could fairly hope to assail the enemy on favorable terms, either in the Wilderness or in the open country beyond.

The narrative gives a multitude of quotations and extracts which show substantially that Lee had foreseen that Hooker's line of advance would be by a turning movement to the right through Hartwood Church to the upper fords of the Rappahannock.

It will be observed that Lee's position was central,

while Hooker's plan involved a turning march of about forty-five miles by his right wing and of about half that distance by his centre and left wing. This simple fact gave Lee a great advantage.

Early in April Lincoln visited the army, and although his military experience was confined to a few weeks' service with the Illinois militia in the Black Hawk war he was entertained and instructed by a series of stately parades and reviews, which must have suggested more of "the circus" and "the grand entry of all nations" to his untrained mind than of the campaign against Lee and his army. It was during this visit that Hooker displayed that overconfidence and nonchalance in speech and deportment which greatly shook the President's confidence in him and his success. It might be true that "he had under his command the finest army on the planet" and that the defeat of Lee and the capture of Richmond were a certainty, but there is no doubt that the President's soul was filled with apprehension which impelled him in taking his leave of Hooker to impress upon him the absolute necessity of putting all his men into his next fight.

V.

The turning movement began April 27, the Eleventh, Twelfth and Fifth corps in the order named were to approach and cross the Rappahannock at Kelly's Ford, while the Second was to take position behind Banks's Ford, about six miles by the dirt road

west of Fredericksburg, but only four as the crow flies. The United States Ford just south of the confluence of the Rapidan with the Rappahannock was also to be used as a crossing point as soon as the turning movement from Kelly's Ford by the way of Germanna and Ely's Fords should force the enemy to uncover it. In carrying out these movements it was evidently Hooker's purpose to make Lee believe that his most serious advance would be by Banks's and the United States Fords. The movements and demonstrations were well designed to that end, but the weather was gloomy rainy and cold and the roads were in places almost impassable. To make matters worse the Eleventh Corps, which had the swinging or marching flank, had encumbered itself by an over-supply of wagons and rations. At most the turning operation should have been completed within two or two and a half days; and yet this corps, which was generally regarded as the poorest in the army, had burdened itself with subsistence for ten days. The mistakes were fatal, for Howard was not only looked upon as the poorest corps commander in the army but his troops contained an excess of foreigners, with but a poor reputation for celerity and steadiness. The turning movement was to be covered by Stoneman with the cavalry, but the strength of that arm, which, as has been stated, amounted to about 11,000 men, was divided and frittered away between himself and his subordinates.

The left wing of the army, consisting of the First, Third and Sixth Corps under Sedgwick, was to cross

the river southeast of Fredericksburg at Fitzhugh's and Franklin's crossings at or before 3:30 o'clock on the morning of the 29th. But as a preliminary to this movement the Third Corps was required to waste time and strength by passing in review before Secretary Seward, several foreign ministers and a large body of civilians.

Considering the broad river, its deep valley and the fortified heights back of Fredericksburg, it is needless to say that none of the steps in this complicated movement was taken in time. Delay and a certain lack of confident resolution characterized them all. But by noon of the 29th the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps, covered by the cavalry and closely followed by the Fifth Corps, were well strung out on the road from Kelly's Ford on the Rappahannock to Germanna Ford on the Rapidan. They met with no serious resistance. Indeed, their march throughout was practically unknown to the enemy, and as the distance between the two fords was short of ten miles and the distance from the last mentioned ford of the Rapidan to Old Wilderness Tavern was less than five miles more the whole march should have been completed before 8 o'clock that night. But history records that while the whole Eleventh Corps had crossed the Rapidan by 11 o'clock P. M., the Twelfth Corps was still crossing at midnight. Both bivouacked south of the river four miles short of the first important objective.

Meade's march from Kelly's Ford to Ely's Ford, further east, was a little longer, but was completed

by 4:30 P. M. Without waiting to lay a bridge, although the weather was rainy and cold, his men forded the river, but instead of pushing on to Chancellorsville, just four miles further, they also went into bivouac. Thus three army corps were south of the Rapidan, but instead of holding a continuous front on the turnpike from Old Wilderness Tavern to Chancellorsville, only four miles apart, the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps had lost touch with the Fifth, and all three with the troops at both United States and Banks's fords.

Hooker now found his army divided and ready neither to deliver nor to receive an attack. Had Meade continued his movement to Chancellorsville he would have forced the enemy to uncover the United States Ford and possibly Banks's Ford also. But as matters then stood Hooker felt compelled to order Couch, with two divisions of the Second Corps from the centre, to establish connection by way of United States Ford with Meade at Ely's Ford, but this was not done till late the next day. The delay was Hooker's rather than Couch's. Hooker was late in giving the order, and as it does not seem to have reached Couch that night, he was necessarily slow in executing it.

VI.

But Lee, although he knew that all parts of Hooker's army were moving, had not yet fully penetrated his opponent's designs. From Sedgwick's ad-

vance he was inclined to believe that Hooker's real plan was after all to cross the Rappahannock with the main part of his army below Fredericksburg, but he naturally asked himself what was the probable destination of the forces now south of the Rapidan. Apparently he believed it to be Gordonsville or an advance in force upon Richmond, or against his communications or even against his own army. The whole country to his left and rear along the Orange and Alexandria Railroad and from Gordonsville to Richmond was open and practically undefended. So without wasting time in guessing, like a prudent commander Lee contracted his own lines by drawing in Jackson, who held his extreme right, and not only getting ready to strike in any direction but to cover his depots at Guiney Station. He cautioned his outlying detachments and especially his cavalry "to be very much on the alert."

Jackson, who had acquired the habit of taking care of himself and of making suggestions, proposed to attack Sedgwick, who had already crossed the river, and while Lee agreed, he thought it might "be hard to get at the enemy" and "harder still" to get away from him in case of success. In short, he put the responsibility upon Jackson, who, after a careful reconnaissance, concluded that he could accomplish nothing in that direction.

It was not till between 6:30 and 6:45 P. M., April 29, that Lee knew of the Federal advance to the Rapidan and not till near noon the next day that he

knew the Federal cavalry, followed by infantry, was advancing on Wilderness Tavern and Chancellorsville. Both places were occupied by noon, and Couch was ordered to move from United States Ford "to support Slocum." A multitude of verbose and confusing orders was issued, but instead of giving a well defined aggressive plan of action Hooker at 2:15, April 30, directed "no advance to be made from Chancellorsville" until the Second, Third, Fifth, Eleventh and Twelfth Corps were concentrated at that place.

While Slocum in the lead established his headquarters that day at Chancellorsville, Howard, moving by the Germanna plank road, reached Dowdall's Tavern, three and a half miles east of Wilderness Tavern, or about half way to Chancellorsville at 4 P. M. His day's march was about seven miles. Under Hooker's orders to cover the right of the line with his own right on Hunting Creek, it was considered by Hooker and Slocum as well as by Howard himself, that the Eleventh Corps should act as "a flank detachment to secure the army against an attack from the west." But without reference to orders or understandings all competent soldiers will agree that this duty was necessarily imposed upon Howard by the position of his corps. There can be no difference of opinion as to this point, and yet it is in evidence that Howard was much more busy in looking toward Todd's Tavern and Welford Furnace, to the south, than he was in looking toward the west. In view of the fact that it is also in evidence that Slocum, with his corps extend-

ing from the old schoolhouse on the turnpike well to the south by the way of Hazel Grove around toward Chancellorsville, had told Howard that he would look out for everything to his own front, it is clear that Howard had but a poor conception of what was required of him.

Hooker and his staff were still twenty miles in rear. They started from Falmouth to Chancellorsville about 4 P. M. of the second day, April 30, but before leaving, Hooker issued a congratulatory order, making this announcement to the army:

"The operations of the last three days have determined that our enemy must either ingloriously fly or come out from behind his entrenchments and give us battle on our own ground, where certain destruction awaits him. The operations of the Fifth, Eleventh and Twelfth corps have been a succession of splendid achievements."

It will be observed that this "succession of splendid achievements" had been gained without fighting or loss of life.

At midnight of April 30 Howard was at Dowdall's Tavern, Slocum south of the plank road covering Chancellorsville, with Meade just west of that place and Couch about three-quarters of a mile north of it. Lee's nearest forces, under Anderson, Mahone, Posey and Wright, were about Zion Church, on the turnpike five miles to the east.

During the whole of that afternoon Hooker was busy in ordering bridges taken up and relaid, directing

Sickles to march with his corps to the United States Ford, Sedgwick to attack and destroy the enemy in his front, and Gibbon to move at daylight the next morning and join the corps to which he belonged. In all this much stress was laid upon "attacking," "striking," "destroying" and "capturing," all of which was to be done by Sedgwick, but there was no promise of any such action on the part of Hooker himself. The right wing was apparently intended to serve as a sort of anvil on which Sedgwick was to crush Lee's army. Reports from Fredericksburg indicated that Lee was receiving reinforcements from Richmond, but this apparently gave Hooker no serious concern.

Lee, it appears, was undecided during most of the day as to whether he should abandon his position near Fredericksburg or fight to retain it, but the concentration of troops at Chancellorsville, together with the inactivity of those at Franklin's Crossing below Fredericksburg, satisfied him later in the day that Hooker's main effort was aimed at his left flank and rear. Expecting, therefore, that Hooker would push on from Chancellorsville to attack him, he determined, again like a self-possessed and competent soldier, to leave a part of his force in their lines to delay Sedgwick while he moved out with the main body of his army to give battle against Hooker's advancing columns. He therefore directed McLaws to re-enforce Anderson at Tabernacle Church, about four miles east of Chancellorsville and two miles west of Salem Church. In the same order he directed Jackson, after designating a

division to hold the lines behind him, to march with the remainder of his corps at daylight the next morning to Tabernacle Church, where he should take charge and make arrangements to repulse the enemy.

The campaign was now on in earnest. Lee's army was concentrated with all parts of it in supporting distance of each other, but Hooker's was divided, with the greater part at or near Chancellorsville, while Sedgwick was separated from him by more than ten miles as the crow flies and by more than sixteen miles by the road on the north and east side of the Rappahannock. From this it will be seen that Lee from his central position was closer to every part of Hooker's army than Hooker's extreme army corps were to each other. In other words, while Lee could operate from his central position on the radii of the circle, Hooker was compelled to operate on the circumference.

While Hooker's passage of the Rappahannock and the Rapidan to the rear of Lee's army may well be classed among the most brilliant manœuvres of modern military history, the division of his forces and the lack of punctuality with which his orders were carried out destined them to end in confusion and defeat.

It appears from the narrative that while the right wing was ordered to cross at Kelly's Ford at the earliest possible moment on the morning of the 28th, it did not commence crossing until six hours after it reached the ford. The left wing, which was to have broken camp early in the morning, did not start till about the middle of the afternoon. The cavalry corps which was to have

crossed at Kelly's Ford by 8 A. M. did not get over until 5 P. M. The bridges which should have been laid below Fredericksburg by 3:30 A. M. of the 29th were not all down until noon of that day. The two divisions of the Second Corps that should have crossed at 7 A. M. did not get over until 5 P. M.

It should be noted that Hooker's success in reaching Chancellorsville was not due to concealment, for while his general plan had been kept secret, the movement once started was soon under observation. There can be no doubt that had Hooker been inspired by the true offensive spirit he would never have allowed his whole force to come to a halt at Chancellorsville, but would have pushed a portion of it down the Rappahannock and taken possession of Banks's Ford. Indeed, he seems to have made all the necessary arrangements which went on with every promise of success until he gave up his advance movement and conceived the idea of receiving an attack on his "own ground" at Chancellorsville.

When it is considered that even with this colossal mistake he had ample time to select the best ground within reach and to fortify it so completely that it would be impregnable, but failed to do so, it will be seen that he might have gained a defensive victory at least. His indecision and lack of a clear and well defined plan did not seem in the least to abate his confidence. Apparently without the slightest conception of his real predicament or the slightest premonition of his impending fate, he declared in the boastful spirit

which had characterized him from the first: "The rebel army is now the legitimate property of the Army of the Potomac. They may as well pack up their haversacks and make for Richmond." It will be recalled to his further discredit that he had been most open and uncompromising in the criticism of his predecessors without perceiving that this added to the necessity of his gaining a substantial victory now that rank and command had fallen to him.

VII.

It is now certain that, notwithstanding the concentration of 70,000 men and 184 pieces of artillery at Chancellorsville and that May 1 was an ideal spring morning, the corps and division commanders on the ground were filled with apprehension. It had been currently reported that Hooker had said the night before that "God Almighty could not prevent his destroying the rebel army," and this, added to the absence of adequate plans and preparations for accomplishing that great end, doubtless disturbed the minds of even the most irreligious. While Warren had gone out bright and early to reconnoitre in the direction of Fredericksburg and Sickles with the Third Corps was coming up from the United States Ford, the other corps commanders gathered at army headquarters for encouragement. They found Hooker as confident as ever that a decisive victory was about to crown the brilliant manœuvres by which he had brought so much

of his command within striking distance of the enemy. As the morning wore away, however, doubt gave way to confidence. Orders and aides-de-camp were flying in all directions, but withal the formal orders of the day were not issued till 11 A. M. Six hours had been already lost, and several hours more were added to the number while the various corps were taking up their new positions. The Fifth Corps was to take position on the river road by 2 o'clock; the Twelfth Corps was to mass near Tabernacle Church; the Eleventh Corps was to be massed on the plank road a mile in rear (to the right) of the Twelfth by 2 o'clock; the Third Corps was to take position about a mile north of Chancellorsville near Chandler's, while one division of the Second Corps was to be thrown forward from the right centre to Todd's Tavern. But it is to be observed that these movements were merely a transfer of the army from one defensive position to another. While they had the effect of taking the army to open ground over which its artillery could play and on which the enemy could be seen should he assume the direct offensive, there was no reference in any of the orders to an advance against the enemy's position.

VIII.

Notwithstanding the successful movements by which Hooker had transferred his army across the rivers and through the Wilderness to within striking distance of the enemy, the narrative makes it clear

that its boastful leader had merely taken up a new defensive position and had no thought of bringing on a battle. This is conclusively shown by Hooker's order dated May 1, 11:30 A. M., directing Sedgwick "to threaten an attack in full force at 1 P. M. and to continue in that attitude until further orders. Let the demonstration be as severe as can be, but not an attack." This order shows that Hooker had not at that hour the slightest conception of the fact that Lee's forces had already been withdrawn from Sedgwick's front and were marching toward Zoar or Zion Church. While Hooker had outwitted Lee the day before by massing his right wing at Chancellorsville, Lee was outwitting Hooker to-day by concentrating an equal number of men and a larger number of guns on the turnpike in his immediate front.

IX.

For the actual conflict, the forces arrayed against each other were about 40,000 men on a side, instead of two of Hooker's to one of Lee's, as they should have been. Jackson's forces were marching in two columns but were hardly in motion when the Federal pickets became aware of the fact. The first gun of the battle of Chancellorsville was fired at twenty minutes past 11. The Confederate cavalry under Stuart and Fitz Lee were well to Lee's left and front, but were still within close supporting distance, while the main body of the national cavalry had not been heard from but were well

to the westward, moving southward in a direction generally parallel with the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. By the Fredericksburg and Orange turnpike, which they crossed at or near Verdiersville, they were about fifteen miles west of Chancellorsville, but if they took any means whatever to make their position or movements known history has failed to record it.

While nothing decisive occurred that day, the advantage was distinctly in favor of Jackson on the plank road and of McLaws on the turnpike. From the first there was heavy skirmishing but no general engagement.

During the afternoon Lee and Jackson met at Decker's on the plank road, and while they were still uncertain as to Hooker's intentions they appeared to be somewhat surprised at the promptness with which he had abandoned his movements toward Fredericksburg as well as at the ease with which his advance had been driven back toward Chancellorsville. From the weak resistance which Jackson encountered he conceived the notion that Hooker would retire that night to the north side of the river. While Lee hoped that this might be realized he did not look for such a result. He could not believe that Fighting Joe would abandon his attempt so easily, and expressed the very reasonable conviction that his real movement would be made from Chancellorsville and not from Fredericksburg.

While a reconnoissance of Hooker's front resulted unfavorably to a direct attack on the part of Lee, it stimulated his activity and that of his subordinates

to determine the exact position of the Federal army and to penetrate its designs if possible. Just exactly what took place between Lee and Jackson or just what was said by one to the other can never be certainly known, but the general result of the conference between the two leaders and of the information obtained in reference to Hooker's position was that Jackson should conduct a turning movement against Hooker's right and rear. Without reference to which of the two great Confederates is entitled to the credit of the conception it is certain that the execution of the movement was entrusted to Jackson with the understanding that Stuart would cover it with his cavalry. It should be remembered that up to that time not an officer or a soldier of Lee's had seen the right flank of Hooker's army. While the Confederate leaders were not only familiar with the country but had the friendly guidance of the people living within it, some of whom believed that troops could be conducted around Hooker's right by the Brock road to the neighborhood of the Old Wilderness Tavern, even that was a matter of conjecture. But the movement in the general direction indicated by Lee having been finally decided upon at about midnight, it was left to Jackson to select the exact route upon which he would move. After a conference with those who knew the country best he concluded to march from Decker's by the way of Wellford Furnace around to the Brock road by a circuitous route entirely outside and south of the Federal pickets, and notified Lee that his troops would be on the march

by 4 o'clock the next morning. The distance to be covered was between nine and ten miles, though that might have been shortened somewhat by cutting off the angles of the roads.

During the night of May 1 and the early morning of the 2d certain tactical movements were made inside Hooker's lines, the main object of which was to form a continuous front from the Rappahannock on the left to the Rapidan on the right, and while the troops felt more or less discouraged in consequence of the day's retrograde movements, they were generally buoyed up with the belief that they were about to fight a great and decisive battle.

X.

At 8 o'clock, May 2, the Federal line, much of which had been covered by hasty intrenchments, extended from Chandler's around Chancellorsville, by Hazel Grove to Dowdall's Tavern and beyond, about four miles in all. Howard held the extreme right along the turnpike, facing directly south for a mile and a half with his right refused, and facing west for about half a mile at a right angle with his main line, while Meade extended Hooker's extreme left from Chandler's by the Mineral Spring road to Scott's Ford on the Rappahannock, about two miles away.

Jackson's command for the turning movement amounted to 31,700 men, or two-thirds of Lee's entire force at hand, with 112 pieces, or four-fifths of his

artillery, while only 13,000, or a third of his available force, with twenty-four pieces, or a fifth of his artillery, remained under Lee's personal supervision on the plank road and turnpike confronting Hooker's main line around Chancellorsville. Certain tactical changes were also made within the Confederate lines before daylight under the cover of a cannonade which opened at 5:16 A. M. for the purpose of obscuring what was going on behind. Strong skirmish lines were also thrown forward by the Confederates. To these the Federal skirmishers promptly responded, which in turn convinced Lee that Hooker had not retreated but was still at hand ready to defend his chosen position.

In consequence of all this Jackson's men did not get started at 4 A. M., as he had so confidently promised, but according to the best authorities it was fully two hours after sunrise, or about 7 o'clock, when his leading division took the road to the west. Passing near Lee, who was standing by the roadside, probably at Decker's, Jackson exchanged the last word that ever passed between him and his commander. His line of march, which was at first parallel with Slocum's front and not more than a mile away, soon brought him in sight of both the Federal officers and the artillery at Hazel Grove. A sharp cannonading opened at once on Jackson's column and not only hurried its march but apparently caused it to swerve to the southward out of sight.

Meanwhile Hooker, who had been riding his lines, returned to headquarters a few minutes after 9 o'clock.

There he found dispatches from Birney informing him that a hostile column with guns, ambulances and trains had been marching across his front south of him, toward the right since 8 o'clock. Hooker himself from his tent in the yard of the Chancellor house now caught sight of the same column passing a divide, disappearing into the valley of a creek and rising to high ground beyond.

After watching this movement for a while and concluding that it was in the direction of Richmond, Hooker spread his map on the bed and gave expression to his thought somewhat as follows: "It can't be retreat; retreat without a fight! That is not Lee. If not retreat, what is it? Lee is trying to flank me."

Now for the first time it seemed to dawn upon him that Lee might be intending to attack, choosing his own ground for that purpose. Hooker while making his personal reconnoissance that morning incidentally discovered that Howard's line had been arranged apparently for the sole purpose of resisting a front attack, and therefore at 9:30 he brought this important matter to Howard's attention, directing him in writing to examine the ground and decide upon the position he would assume to meet the enemy, "no matter from what quarter he might advance." He added by way of postscript: "We have good reason to suppose the enemy is moving to our right. Please advance your pickets . . . as far as may be safe in order to obtain timely information of their approach." But it will be observed that both the body and postscript of

this communication were lacking in point and precision. Instead of directing Howard positively to throw back his right wing, or better, his whole corps, and form a strong front to resist an onset from the west, it not only contained no such instructions but not a word to him or to any one else looking to the arrest of Jackson's march or to a counter advance against Lee which would make him look to his own security. Instead of going in person to Howard, as he might well have done, he contented himself with remaining at Chancellorsville and sending word to Sedgwick, at least ten miles away, "to attack the enemy in his front," if he had a chance, but leaving it to "his discretion" whether he should do so or not. This makes it clear that Hooker was then aware from personal observation "that Sedgwick had failed to hold Lee in his position on the Rappahannock," and that the point of interest was now moving toward the west.

Meanwhile Lee in person was calmly waiting for Jackson's movement to develop, but fully appreciating the possibility of failure, he spent a part of his time in writing to President Davis. Realizing that the Army of the Potomac was in a strong position around Chancellorsville, with its communications extending, as he thought, to the Rapidan on the right and to the Rappahannock on the left, he concluded that Hooker was determined to make the fight then and there. Like a prudent man, however, he declared to Davis that if he found the enemy too strong he would abandon Fredericksburg and his advanced position to cover

Richmond. If successful he would save both and retain his communications. He evidently had no expectation of reinforcements from Longstreet or from North Carolina in time to take part in the contest, but thought they might reach him in time for subsequent use. While marching by his left to come up in Hooker's rear he did not for a minute lose sight of the fact that the advantage of numbers and position was still greatly in favor of his opponent.

By 10:50 that morning Howard himself had seen "a column of infantry" moving westward "on a ridge about two miles south" of his own position and had signified his intention of "taking measures to resist an attack from the west." This is apparently the first and only conception of that officer as to the real danger threatening him.

At noon Sickles received Hooker's orders to harass the enemy in the direction of Wellford Furnace, and sent Birney in the same direction to pierce the column and gain possession of the road over which it was marching. Had this movement been pressed with vigor and supported by a sufficient number of troops from the line in rear it might have arrested the turning movement and saved the day, but no such good fortune was in store for the overconfident Hooker. Jackson's column, although here and there in sight of Federal pickets and patrols, continued its leisurely march without seeing a hostile soldier till it arrived near Burton's farm in the angle between the turnpike and the Orange plank road, about half a mile in front of Howard's centre.

From that point Jackson saw a line of intrenchments extending along the turnpike with abatis and stacked arms in the rear. Back of these he saw soldiers in groups laughing, chatting and smoking, all unconscious of his proximity. He had expected to find the Orange plank road clear and by turning east along that road to conduct his columns to Howard's right and rear. So far from this being the case, however, it became clear that he was not yet in front of Howard's right flank. He could plainly see the Federal line extending at least half a mile west of the junction of the two roads, but how much further in the same direction it was impossible to guess. Only one thing was certain, namely that he should return to the Brock road and continue his march northward along it till he reached the east and west turnpike. From Fitzhugh Lee he had learned that no part of the Federal army rested as far west as Wilderness Tavern. The road east of that place toward Chancellorsville was clear for an indefinite distance, and the only way in which he could satisfy himself how far it was clear was to throw himself across that road facing and advancing to the eastward along it. It was now 2 o'clock. He had covered only eight miles of his march, or about one mile an hour, but it was still fully a mile and a half to the turnpike by the Brock road, which in that part of its course runs nearly due north. If Jackson had gathered any correct understanding of his own position at this hour, his slowness and deliberation were utterly inexcusable.

At about 4 P. M. Pleasonton's brigade of cavalry, all there was with Hooker's army, was sent from Chancellorsville to co-operate with Birney and Sickles south of Hazel Grove, instead of to Howard's right, to keep watch and ward in that quarter. At the same hour Hooker ordered Howard to detach a brigade to support Sickles, which shows conclusively that although the day was three-quarters gone Hooker had as yet no conception of the real situation.

Howard's dispositions at that time were briefly as follows. His headquarters were at Dowdall's Tavern at the junction of the turnpike and plank roads. He had a picket of sharpshooters about 1,000 yards further west on the Turnpike. East of that picket he had five regiments or 2,200 infantry and eighteen pieces of artillery, all facing west. Along the Turnpike for 2,200 yards or something over a mile he had twenty regiments or about 8,600 infantry and eighteen guns facing south; or in all about 10,500 infantry and thirty-four guns, not counting Birney's division or Barlow's brigade, which organizations had advanced to the south in support of Sickles, thus leaving a break of about a mile along the Turnpike, between the left of the Eleventh and the right of the Twelfth corps. Weak intrenchments had been thrown up here and there, but the troops facing west, instead of being in one well defined and strongly intrenched line, were displayed in three distinct but feeble lines, commanded respectively by Von Gilsa, Schurz and Bushbeck, all foreigners, and not one of them an experienced

first class officer. As neither of these lines rested on a natural obstacle or had any special feature of strength, and as the whole force facing south was strung out along the Turnpike, the only line of lateral communication, with embankments and rifle pits in front and thick woods in rear, the situation for defence was about as bad as it could be.

Both Hooker and Howard should have known by this time the danger gathering about their right flank. The enemy's columns had been sighted at various points from the centre to the extreme right of the army; scouting parties from Howard's line had brought in word that hostile skirmishers in considerable numbers had been encountered from one and a half to two miles out; heavy columns had been seen at various times during the day, marching steadily to the west, but Hooker deluded himself with the thought that Sickles was pressing their flank and rear. Heavy artillery firing was also heard from that direction, but finally died out. Schurz thought that Sickles's operation had been suspended, but Howard continued to believe that it was progressing successfully. Later an officer-of-the-day came in from Deven's picket line with the report that a large force of the enemy was passing by the right to the rear, but instead of receiving credit for what he had seen he was called a coward and ordered to his regiment with the remark that the enemy was retreating. In spite of all this it is evident that the officers of the fighting line were filled with apprehension.

As late as 3 o'clock a field-officer reported that the enemy was massed on the Plank road ready to attack; another that he was actually advancing. Strangely enough the first was laughed at and told not to be alarmed, while the second was sent back to his own corps to "tell his yarn there." At corps headquarters they informed him that Lee was in full retreat and that the doughty Howard had gone out with Barlow's brigade "to fall upon his rear." And yet at that precise minute Jackson was writing Lee that the enemy had made a stand at Dowdall's Tavern two miles from Chancellorsville, that his [Jackson's] leading division was up and the next two "well closed," and that he intended to attack "as soon as practicable."

That Hooker in spite of all these facts was still laboring under the delusion that Lee was retreating is shown by the fact that he had just sent out orders directing his corps commanders "to replenish their supplies of forage, provisions and ammunition and be ready to start at an early hour tomorrow." An hour and forty minutes later, or at 4:10 P. M., he directed Sedgwick "to cross the river . . . capture Fredericksburg with everything in it and vigorously pursue the enemy." To clinch the matter he added: "We know that the enemy is fleeing, trying to save his trains. Two of Sickles's divisions are among them."

It is probable that Hooker did not believe all he said, and it is certain that he did not know that Lee was in retreat or in what direction he was going. The student who follows this part of the narrative closely

will be at no loss as to the actual facts, but at a very great loss to understand how Hooker could have so misconceived their fatal import.

XI.

While all was uncertain within Hooker's lines, Jackson was proceeding slowly but with unerring determination to form his troops across and perpendicular to the Turnpike. His headquarters were at Luckett's house near the centre of his line, and his front was something over two miles long, with its right wing extending south from the Turnpike to the Orange plank road. The distance from his headquarters to Howard's was about a mile and a half. His troops were formed in three lines so that those in the rear could fill the gaps which might occur in front. If his left did not rest on the Ely's Ford road it was because its first advance would certainly place it across that road and thus cut off all possible communication between Howard and either of the fords behind him on the Rapidan. Jackson's entire force in position for the attack amounted to about 26,500 men and six guns, as against the actual 2,200, and the possible 10,800 which Howard could bring into line to resist him. In view of the fact, however, that Howard had facing west at that time only 2,200 infantry and three batteries of artillery his fate was sealed from the first. While many of his troops were poor and much looked down upon because they were largely emotional and excitable foreigners, no

effort either they or Howard could have made with all his men facing west could have proved efficacious. It might have delayed but could not have stopped the enemy's onset.

Jackson's men had gone into position in silence. Their bugles were still, and even their orders were transmitted in a low voice. All cheering and unnecessary noise were forbidden at first and the troops were directed to push ahead at the word without pause, using the Turnpike as a directrix. When any portion of the first line needed re-enforcement the proper commanding officer was to call for and receive it from the next line in rear. Under no circumstance was there to be halt or pause, except that if the Federals should make a stand to hold Dowdall's Tavern the Confederate infantry should halt long enough for the artillery to come forward and clear the way. All accounts concur in the statement that Jackson was confident of victory from the first and that he had arranged after driving Howard's forces back to the old school house two miles in rear to detach a part of his force to the northeast by the Bullock road to move on Chandler's at the junction of Ely's and Scott's Ford roads, not only for the purpose of breaking Hooker's connections with the fords but of driving his routed army into or beyond the Rappahannock.

At 5 o'clock in the afternoon, or ten hours after parting with Lee, Jackson began his attack, and although some little confusion occurred in getting the main line and the skirmishers started at the same time,

that was soon straightened out, with the result that both silently pushed on through the underbrush till they came in sight of and rushed upon the Federal outpost and picket line. Once engaged the bugles rang clear and loud in the evening air and a mighty roar of human voices shook the forest to its innermost recesses. The firing of the Federal pickets and the rush of "the startled game" from its covert gave the alarm to the Federal line in the rear, which, be it noted, had already stacked arms and was getting supper, preparatory to making itself comfortable for the night. The surprise was complete. The Federals knew at once that the enemy were upon them, but could form no idea of their number or the extent of their front. They had time, however, to seize their arms and take their position in the line of defence. Von Gilsa's two regiments on the right, exposed both to artillery and infantry fire, were somewhat under cover and at first were a surprise to the enemy, but seeing that they were outnumbered and resistance was useless they made haste to beat a retreat. This example was followed by both Schurz's and Steinwehr's divisions, but no successful stand could be made until the whole force on that flank reached Taylor's house, half a mile to the rear.

A great state of confusion necessarily followed the enemy's first onset. As before stated, his strength was 26,500 men as against 2,200, or over ten to one, and no matter what courage might have been displayed or what formations resorted to, the defeat of the

Federal force was a certainty and their capture highly probable.

Howard, who had been making a reconnoissance, got back to his headquarters about this time, and although the distance to the fighting was not over a mile not a sound or other indication of the conflict had yet reached him. He found no news, except that Lee's column had been crossing the Plank road obliquely about three miles out and apparently headed toward Orange court house, or nearly due west. According to his own account it was 6 o'clock before he heard the sound of the firing at his outposts, but on reaching Taylor's Height the awful truth burst upon him. Then for the first time he saw his disheartened men on every side swarming out of the thickets which he had thought to be impenetrable. He says in his autobiography that "it was a terrible gale. The rush, the rattle, the quick lightning from a hundred points at once; the roar doubled by echoes through the forest; the panic, the dead and dying in sight, and the wounded straggling along; the frantic efforts of the brave and patriotic to stay the angry storm."

It was a sight well calculated to demoralize a stronger man than the hapless Howard, whose neglect and disregard of orders, as well as of proper precautions, were the main cause of the confusion and panic which surrounded him. Had he been an alert and competent soldier he would have had his whole corps facing the enemy as far to the right as Taylor's Heights, and although he would still have been outnumbered

bered two and a half to one he could doubtless have checked the enemy long enough to allow Hooker to come to his assistance, or at least to form his own army, two miles in the rear, in such a manner as would enable it to put up a successful resistance.

All the testimony serves to show that Howard, as well as his staff-officers and subordinate commanders, exerted themselves bravely and fearlessly to resist the enemy's advance. A multitude of details is given. Some few organizations, especially those in which the majority were foreigners, behaved badly, but the remainder of the evening and night passed in confusion and aimless despair. On the whole there is no chapter of recent American history more disgraceful than that which describes the disorderly resistance of the Federal and unvarying success of the Confederate leader. So far as can now be seen this was the inevitable result of Jackson's commanding position on the flank, his overwhelming superiority of numbers, and of the unfaltering onset of his followers, no matter what force or obstacles were in their front. In later years, Howard declared that he had done his best on that occasion, and while he had not been able to stay the Confederate onset, he had always felt that "Stonewall Jackson was more to blame for the results than he or any Federal commander was." He might have added, with even more truth, that Hooker was still more to blame than either Jackson or himself. This remark applies, of course, to the actual fight, where all the advantages of numbers and position were in favor of

the Confederates, but it in no way mitigates or excuses the neglect of Howard and Hooker to discover Jackson's actual movements and position and to form their force in such manner as would best enable them to stay his progress.

Once on the Federal flank, with his force formed in three lines perpendicular to Howard's main line, with only 2,200 men facing him, Jackson's success, and the extent to which it might be carried were simply a matter of push and endurance on the part of the Confederates. Had not their much lauded leader lost three hours in starting his turning movement and two hours more, at least, in completing his final formation and in beginning his attack, he would have had fully five hours more daylight in which to give his movements precision and to press his advantages to their full fruition. He would neither have fallen a victim to his own men in the dark nor failed to see both friend and enemy in all their positions and movements before the light failed him. What else might have resulted is a matter of speculation, but it is safe to add, from the incontestable testimony of the records, that there was no battle of the civil war in which more was lost by deliberation and delay, when the swiftness of the tiger was required, than was lost by the Confederates in their torpid march and advance on Chancellorsville. While they gained a great victory, it might have been made still more complete if they had recognized that, under just such circumstances, celerity was the greatest of military virtues. In this connec-

tion it will be well to recall that Jackson has been criticised by Confederate writers for the fatal blunder of halting his corps at White Oak Swamp all day instead of crossing it and advancing to the attack the Sunday before the battle of Malvern Hill. Proper activity upon that occasion might have prevented Lee's defeat the next day and given him a crushing victory over McClellan and his demoralized army.

With two such charges in the account, the conclusion is inevitable that Jackson, with all his soldierly accomplishments, was not a general of the highest class, but was occasionally a dreamer and a laggard.

XII.

While Jackson was rolling up and driving Howard's badly posted corps back upon Dowdall's Tavern, just two miles away, Hooker, with two aides-de-camp, was sitting on the porch of the Chancellor House enjoying the summer evening. Not a sound had reached him from Taylor's farm nor the Wilderness Church. Not an officer had come for aid or to warn him of the impending danger. It was between 6.15 and 6.30 when he caught the first sound of distant artillery coming from the west, but even then, instead of ascribing it to its true cause, he thought it might be from Birney or Sickles, who had been sent south to fall upon "the retreating enemy."

Within the vigilant Hancock's lines the suggestion was made that the sound of the distant cannonading

came from Stoneman's cavalry or from some other Federal force which had fallen upon the rear of a part of the Confederate forces and was driving them eastwardly into the Federal lines. Astounding as it may seem, the shells from the west, which already had begun to fall near Chancellorsville, were said to be from Federal guns firing at the enemy, as above. It was not till Howard's men were met, retreating in confusion with the trains and ambulances along the Turnpike from the direction of Dowdall's Tavern, that these delusions were swept away—not till Hooker and his aides-de-camp had ridden up the road and met the sickening crowd of fugitives from the west, that either Hooker or his staff knew that the Confederates had fallen upon his right flank and rear and put his whole force in that quarter into full retreat.

Meanwhile, Schurz, Von Steinwehr and Bushbeck, aided by fragments of Devens's division, amounting to about four thousand men in all, still with the colors, formed across the road a quarter of a mile west of the old schoolhouse. They occupied a line of shallow intrenchments previously constructed covering a front of a thousand yards, but at 7.10 P. M., Jackson, with overwhelming numbers, turned both flanks of this line, swept over its intrenchments, and put all there was left of the Eleventh Corps in flight. A part of it went on to Fairview, a third of a mile west of Chancellorsville, but the main body, under Schurz and Bushbeck, took the Bullock road to Chandler's, leaving Chancellorsville three-quarters of a mile to the right. This

was practically the end of the Eleventh Corps in that campaign. While it had for two hours, unsupported and alone, done such fighting as it could with its faulty formation, its disintegration was now complete. Henceforth, and for years afterwards, the principal aim of Howard and his officers was to vindicate themselves from the results of mistakes which were by no means wholly their own.

But as darkness was now on, the confusion was by no means confined to the Eleventh Corps. Jackson's victorious brigades and divisions, weakened by stragglers in considerable numbers, in their victorious onrush, had also fallen into disorder, and were, therefore, necessarily compelled to reform their own lines before they could resume their advance. Both sides were, for a while, uncertain as to the next step, but in the midst of the confusion stragglers in large numbers began to make their appearance in front of the main Federal position from the south by the way of Hazel Grove. Sickles, who held chief command in that quarter, although under orders to attack, had evidently learned that Howard had been driven back, and becoming doubtful whether he should go forward or withdraw also, sent word to Hooker that he would make a night attack if supported by Williams's and Berry's divisions, but exactly what he hoped to gain thereby is by no means apparent. Only one thing seems clear, there was as much doubt, darkness and uncertainty in his front as elsewhere. The Federal line, so far as it could be called a line, had been so contracted that

from 11 o'clock till midnight it extended from Lewis Creek by the way of Hazel Grove, west of Fairview, across the Turnpike to the Bullock road and Little Hunting Creek. It was about a mile and a quarter long. The Confederate line, about a third of a mile west, with its right flank refused, conformed in a general way to the Federal line. With daylight the situation would have been favorable to the Federals, though they were doubtless still more or less shaken by Jackson's success.

Meanwhile Sickles, having received authority for his night attack, advanced his line by the light of the moon with fixed bayonets and pieces uncapped with the antiquated idea of giving the enemy "cold steel," apparently northwestwardly toward the Plank road and the temporary intrenchments in which Howard's men had made their last stand. With neither skirmishers nor scouts in advance, the enemy's exact position could not be determined, but it so happened that the centre of the Federal mass penetrated the interval between the Federal left and the Confederate right, where it received the cross fire of both friend and foe. The right of the line actually charged a Federal battery before they discovered that they were attacking friends. Slocum, who commanded the Twelfth Corps, had not been informed that a night attack was contemplated, and on hearing the firing supposed that the enemy were advancing against the left of his position, and at once opened a heavy artillery fire, all of which, as a matter of course, was futile.

It seems to have been a night of pandemonium in that quarter as well as in what had been Howard's front. Williams, a Federal division commander, in a private letter to a friend, said of it:

"A tremendous roll of infantry fire mingled with yellings and shoutings almost diabolical and infernal, opened the conflict. . . . In the intervals of the musketry I could distinctly hear the oaths and imprecations of the rebel officers, evidently having hard work to keep their men from stampeding.

"In the meantime Sickles's artillery opened fire over the heads of the infantry, and the din of arms and inhuman yelling and cursing redoubled. . . . Shortly, Best began to thunder with his thirty odd pieces in front and on the flank; shell, shot and bullets were poured into the woods, which were evidently crowded with rebel masses. . . . Human language can give no idea of the scene. Such an infernal and yet sublime combination—sound, flame and smoke and dreadful yells of rage, pain and of triumph!"

It was at the beginning of this period of pandemonium that Jackson, whose front had contracted from two miles to about half a mile, was on the Plank road, encouraging his men to move "right ahead, right ahead!" Shortly afterwards Hill joined him, and was told to "press them, cut them off from the United States Ford, Hill; press them!". Then, directing his chief engineer to guide Hill to the front, Jackson halted and listened to the sounds from the Federal lines. Hearing the ringing of axes and the officers giving

commands, he turned about, moving toward his own troops, but shortly halted a second time to listen, when a volley of musketry from the Federal lines admonished him that he was in danger. He and his party, therefore, hurriedly took to the woods north of the Plank road and were working their way to the rear, when the noise of their horses and their clanking sabres coming from the front alarmed the men in line into the belief that a charge was about to break upon them. It was that incident in the dark which caused an excited officer to give the order to fire and to repeat the firing. It turned out that the returning general and his party were not more than twenty paces in front when the regiment holding that part of the Confederate line delivered a volley which was fearfully effective. Three balls struck Jackson, one penetrating the palm of his right hand, the second passing around his left wrist, and the third splintering his left arm, severing the artery between the shoulder and elbow.

The same volley killed a staff officer and two orderlies. Jackson's frightened horse, becoming unmanageable, dashed through the woods to within a hundred yards of the Federal skirmishers before it was caught and led to the rear, still carrying its disabled rider. Great confusion necessarily followed, and there was hurrying to and fro among his excited followers. The Federal artillery at Chancellorsville and Fairview opened fire, which greatly increased the excitement. Naturally, it was but a short time till it was known throughout the Confederate lines that Jack-

son had been wounded and sent to the rear; that Hill, his successor, had met with a similar misfortune, and that in his turn, Stuart, who had been operating against Averell at Ely's Ford, four or five miles away, was brought to the front, where he found himself at midnight in command of Jackson's victorious but disordered divisions. His first formal act was, consequently, to suspend operations till morning.

It would have been a little less than miraculous, under the circumstances, if the Confederate forces, although favored by a brilliant moonlight night and excited to frenzy by the great success they had gained so far, had not lost their way as well as their victorious impulse. And thus the battle in the dark came to an end.

During that day Hooker had received reinforcements amounting to 9,000 men and forty-five pieces of artillery. Estimating his losses at 3,000 men and eight pieces of artillery, he still had under his immediate command at and about Chancellorsville 76,000 men and 244 pieces of artillery.

Lee had received no reinforcements, but had detached one regiment of infantry and one battery of four guns. He had lost about 1,250 men killed, wounded and missing, which left him and Stuart facing Hooker with about 43,000 men and 132 pieces of artillery. Early was still watching the lower fords of the Rappahannock, and covering the depots at Guiney Station.

XIII.

At 5 A. M., May 3, the contending forces, as

above enumerated, confronted each other west of Chancellorsville. Stuart, with about 26,500 infantry and all the artillery he could use, in three lines, 1,300 yards from front to rear and a mile and a half long, held the Turnpike for a mile east of Wilderness Church, facing Sickles, Slocum and Couch about and in front of Fairview, and crossing the Turnpike a mile west of Chancellorsville. Lee, in person, with the rest of his army (except Early) a mile south and south-east of Chancellorsville, held a line about two miles long with its right on the Turnpike to Fredericksburg, its centre on the Plank road and its left somewhat refused in the direction of Welford Furnace.

At early dawn Stuart's men were under arms, but not yet ready to advance. Rations had to be issued and lines straightened out, but in spite of all this, at 6 o'clock the whole of his skirmishers moved to the attack. The battle was joined at once, and after much heavy fighting, which was generally favorable to the Confederates, the Federal lines were driven back, or voluntarily fell back, step by step, till 9.30. Both Hazel Grove and Fairview were lost, and the artillery massed at the latter place was withdrawn to a new position between Fairview and Chancellorsville.

When the Federal situation, say at or soon after 9 o'clock, was at its worst, and the whole line in a shaky condition, Hooker, while leaning over the balustrade of the veranda of the Chancellor House to receive an officer from Sickles calling for reinforcements, was struck by a fragment of a wooden pillar, near

which he had been standing. It had been hit by a solid shot and split into two pieces, one of which struck both his body and his head, knocking him senseless. For a few moments he seemed to be dying, but under the care of his surgeon he soon revived sufficiently to show himself to the troops. The news of the accident, however, soon spread to the army, and Couch, the senior corps commander, a stout hearted and courageous officer, presented himself at headquarters, as in duty bound, for the purpose of relieving the wounded generalissimo.

Meanwhile, although Hooker's side was not fully recovered, he was mounting to ride to Chandler's, in the rear, but said nothing about giving up the command. At times during the day he suffered paroxysms of pain and when not in pain he seemed to be stupid or lacking sense to give orders adequate to the occasion. He had mentally collapsed and it was now certain that he had lost confidence in himself.

For years it was supposed that Hooker, who had been generally regarded as a drinking man, was under the influence of liquor both at the time of the accident and afterward, but the author, who evidently made a thorough investigation in all directions, concludes that such was not the case, and gives it as his opinion that the general had voluntarily denied himself and drank nothing from the beginning of the campaign and nothing after the accident, except a small measure of brandy which the surgeon prescribed to revive him, till the army was safely on the north side of the Rappahannock. The author also makes it clear, although Hooker

suffered "paroxysms of pain" at intervals afterward and in later life became partly paralyzed on the injured side, that his loss of power to command with his normal intelligence was due mostly to constitutional defects brought out by the overwhelming disaster "the best army on the planet" had met with under his overconfident leadership from an army "that God Almighty couldn't save."

Early that morning Hooker had ordered Sedgwick forward and was, at the time of his accident, expecting him to advance from Fredericksburg against Lee's right and rear, but it is clear that he had not as yet thought of attacking Lee in front unless Sedgwick should, at the same time, attack him in rear. It also appears that he had no thought of reinforcing the troops in the fighting line without Sedgwick's approach and co-operation. But hearing nothing from Sedgwick and being still in doubt as to his movements ten miles to the eastward, with Lee's army holding the road between them, Hooker decided on his own responsibility to abandon the field, and sent for Couch to join him at his new camp near Chandler's house. Here Couch found him lying in a tent by himself, and as he entered Hooker, rising on his elbow, said, "Couch, I turn the command of the army over to you. You will withdraw it and place it in the position designated on this map."

It will be observed that the above-mentioned order, given at or about 9.30 o'clock, was framed in terms which left Couch no independent authority, but compelled him, whether he approved it or not, to withdraw

the army from its position in front of and around Chancellorsville. This was followed at once by another order, evidently issued by Hooker in person, directing Sickles, who held the extreme southern front, to withdraw to a new line, and instructing Hancock and Geary to follow him as soon as the road was clear. And this was the shameful situation when Lee, with Anderson's disjointed line, had made his way by his left to Hazel Grove, where he connected with Stuart's right. This junction took place at about 10 A. M.

With such pusillanimous orders, in face of the reunited Confederate forces, it was of the greatest importance that the Federal army should gain time and hold the enemy at bay until the roads leading to the rear could be cleared of stragglers and the broken and disordered divisions and brigades, which had been driven back, could be reformed. While less than half its strength had been engaged, the whole army was more or less shaken by the untoward events and misfortunes which, beginning with Howard's defeat the day before, had ended with the mental paralysis of the chief commander and his determination to retreat from the advantageous position which his initial manœuvres had given to him and his army.

The emergency, which he had no part in bringing about, weighed heavily upon Couch, but nobly did he set about performing the duty which it brought to him. "His example was superb. Of slight stature . . . and a simple and retiring demeanor, he became sublime as the passion of battle and the high mounting sense

of duty took complete possession of every power and faculty, every thought and feeling, every limb and nerve. His horse was killed, he was himself twice hit. Nobly, too, was he seconded . . . by Hancock, whose horse was killed" and whose remount was hardly large enough "to allow the General's feet to clear the ground."

Meade and Humphreys also, with unshaken courage, while anxious to remain upon the field and fight it out, lent their best efforts to withdraw the army and maintain order in its retirement to the river.

XIV.

By 10 o'clock the withdrawal of the army was fully under way, but with such men as the young and heroic Kirby to cover the rear with his artillery, and with such gallant commanders as Meade, Hancock, Humphreys and Allabach to direct the infantry, the final movements were made with regularity and deliberation. It was a bright, balmy Sunday morning, in the pause of battle, when it was discovered that the dry leaves, abatis and dead wood of the surrounding forest had caught fire, and many of the wounded, whom it was intended to save, had been left to perish miserably in the flames. It was pitiful to see the charred bodies hugging the sheltering trees, the outstretched hands of those who had died fighting fire, the gaping wounds—the torn and mangled limbs, and the dissevered heads of those who had fallen and been left to their

distressing fate. By noon the withdrawal had been completed and the main body of the army had reached a place of safety on the south bank of the Rappahannock.

The ghastly narrative now turns to Lee and Sedgwick. By the middle of the morning Lee had ridden to the front of his advancing line, where he was received with "one of those uncontrollable outbursts of enthusiasm" which are inspired by victory alone. "The fierce soldiers with their faces blackened by the smoke of battle, the wounded, crawling with feeble limbs from the devouring flames, all seemed possessed of a common impulse. One long unbroken cheer, in which the feeble cry of those who lay helpless on the earth blended with the strong voices of those who still fought, hailed the presence of the victorious chief."

But in the midst of this splendid ovation a formal note of congratulation from Jackson brought official confirmation of the fact that he had been disabled by wounds, and this in turn called forth the memorable reply from Lee: "Could I have directed events, I should have chosen for the good of the country to be disabled in your stead. I congratulate you upon the victory, which is due to your skill and energy."

While Stuart's management of the attacking force at that juncture "made up in spirit what it lacked in skill," it was much criticized afterward by the Comte de Paris as well as by many Southern writers. But the substantial defeat which he inflicted upon his opponents that morning is his sufficient vindication. The

valor displayed by the soldiers of his new command was of the highest order, but the true time for gaining a complete and overwhelming victory was the day before during the five hours of daylight which they lost in starting and in marching around Hooker's flank, and in forming for the attack which they finally delivered with such surprising impetuosity and success.

The author indulges in much acute criticism, both of Hooker and the Confederate leaders on that memorable day, but the military student will doubtless regard the defective operations and the tactical mistakes of either side as of secondary importance in comparison with Jackson's loss of time and the confusion which necessarily resulted from his wound and from the night fighting which followed, under his successor.

Lee, at about 12.30 P. M. of the 3rd, was on the point of throwing his 34,000 men against Hooker's 75,000 in a final onset which might have been successful, but his plan was changed by the ominous tidings which reached him at that juncture that the Federal forces had carried the heights of Fredericksburg and were then advancing against his rear by the Plank road. Hastily detaching McLaws's division and Mahone's brigade of Anderson's, with Alexander's artillery, to march in the direction of the new danger, with the instincts of a fighting general, Lee went in person in the same direction, leaving Stuart on the defensive and waiting for developments. Hooker, meanwhile, had shamefully forgotten the President's parting injunction: "In your next fight put in all your

men," 35,000 of whom, be it remembered, had not yet fired a shot. Unfortunately the necessary leadership was lacking. Couch was not authorized to exercise the supreme command because Hooker still retained it. The author sensibly suggests, in view of all the facts as they were known to the chief surgeon and to the leading staff officers, that Hooker should have been relieved by them as unfit for further service and that the second in command should have been notified that it was his imperative duty to take charge of the army. Such action as this called for the highest qualities, and it was an untoward fatality that they were not forthcoming.

According to his orders, Sedgwick should have been within striking distance of Chancellorsville by daylight of May 3. He started at midnight. The distance to be overcome was a scant ten miles, but as soon as his head of column left the bridge by which it crossed the Rappahannock, it found itself resisted by hostile skirmishers which had to be brushed out of the way. It was, therefore, 2 o'clock when it reached the outskirts, and three before the main column, composed of the Second and Third divisions, took up the march. Sedgwick was a cautious and deliberate man, and although Butterfield, the chief of staff, did what he could to support and to push him to the front, as well as to make him understand that rapidity and promptitude were expected of him, it must be confessed that he at no time displayed the celerity which the circumstances of the case so loudly called for.

When all his forces were united he had 25,600 men and 66 field guns with which to dislodge and drive back 11,600 men and 48 guns. While the disparity was about two to one it was none too great for the assault and capture of Marye's Heights, where the Confederates were strongly fortified. Seeing with his practised eye that the position was a strong one, Sedgwick made all his dispositions with deliberation. He had issued orders that his men should not fire a shot, but "trust to cold steel," and when the charge was sounded the veterans of the Sixth Corps in three lines rushed over the stone wall and the works beyond without faltering. While this successful assault took but a few minutes and cost but 1,500 men killed, wounded and missing, it was not made till about 10.50 A. M., at about which time, it will be remembered, Lee was sweeping Hooker's rear guard out of Chancellorsville.

The creditable but delayed affair at Marye's Heights not only broke the Confederate forces into two parts and forced them back in confusion on divergent roads, but developed an excellent occasion for the use of cavalry against the fleeing infantry, artillery and wagon trains. The opportunity for prisoners and spoils was a good one, but Sedgwick had no mounted troops and, therefore, pushed on from Marye's Heights with but a single division of infantry by the Turnpike toward Salem Church, five miles out, or about half way to Chancellorsville. Till he reached that point he met with but little opposition. McLaws, Wilcox, Kershaw, Wofford, Semmes and Mahone, with their united force,

had got there before him. Having occupied a strongly intrenched position close to the church, they were ready to make savage resistance against any force that might assail them.

With his cautious advance it was about half past three when Sedgwick's skirmishers came upon the enemy's dismounted cavalry covering his line in the rear and forced it back upon McLaws at Salem Church. This position was well chosen, and as the enemy now numbered about 10,000, nearly all of whom were covered by intrenchments, it was a difficult and doubtful task to dislodge them. Much severe fighting was followed by partial success and much loss on either side. On the whole the Confederates held their ground, and it was half past six when the Federals again rushed to the attack and tried in vain to turn the tide of battle. Their attack failed, their line was broken and driven in confusion to the rear, but fresh troops arriving from Fredericksburg were thrown across the road to stop stragglers and make good the favorable position upon which to reform the broken Federal lines. With over 20,000 men at his disposal Sedgwick had assailed the intrenched position of the enemy with only 5,000 men. The odds were two to one against him, but had he waited till his whole force had joined him they would have been two to one against the enemy.

The opposing forces slept on their arms that night with the dead lying unburied near them. The self-poised Sedgwick was greatly disturbed, as well he might be. While he knew but little of what had hap-

pened to Hooker, he was fully aware of the fact that his own operations were not only behind time, but that his movements had been thwarted by the Confederates, whom he had found in such strength, barring his way. It is said that he slept scarcely at all that night, but rising from his blanket in the damp grass at intervals, he would walk a few paces apart and listen, and then returning, throw himself upon the ground and try in vain to sleep. The Confederates were quiescent also, but as Hooker had retired from Chancellorsville, and showed no signs of assuming the offensive, Lee decided to reinforce that part of his army at Salem Church so that it might take the offensive at an early hour the next morning.

Under this arrangement Stuart, with about 25,000 Confederates, was to confront Hooker and his 75,000 men, while Anderson, Early and McLaws with about 23,000 men were to be thrown against Sedgwick, whose forces on the field now numbered fully 19,000. It is, therefore, clear that the opposing forces at Salem Church were more nearly equal that morning than upon any other occasion of the campaign, though the advantage was decidedly with the Confederates, for they were on the defensive. But while Lee now thought Sedgwick had two corps instead of one, Sedgwick believed that Confederate reinforcements of 15,000 which he supposed had come from Richmond had occupied the heights of Fredericksburg, cutting him off from the town. In other words, each commander at that moment estimated the strength of the other at about twice as many as it actually was.

At 7 A. M., May 4, Anderson, with three brigades, started to join McLaws at Salem Church. By eight, Early, with the troops which had been watching the Rappahannock below Fredericksburg and covering Guiney Station, but which Hooker thought had come from Richmond, had retaken the heights of Fredericksburg, and leaving about 1,600 men and sixteen pieces to bar the road to the west against Gibbon from the east side of the river, with the remainder of his force, amounting to 10,400, marched against Sedgwick's rear, but did not think it prudent to attack till Anderson had joined McLaws, which he did at 11 o'clock. At this juncture, Lee arrived on the ground and arranged a general attack front and rear on Sedgwick, to be made at the firing of three signal guns in rapid succession.

Meanwhile Sedgwick had decided to hold his present position till dark and then to withdraw to the bridges at Banks's and Scott's fords. It will be seen, however, that this was not only an abandonment of the road to Fredericksburg, but a retreat northward to form a junction with Hooker, whose left now rested at Scott's. Sedgwick had no means of knowing the enemy's actual strength, but placing it at 40,000 he thought himself heavily outnumbered. From the dispatches between him and Hooker it appears that he felt at liberty, after withdrawing to the north, to hold his new position on the south bank of the Rappahannock or to cross over, as he might think best at that time. But the situation was further complicated by the fact

that Hooker, since the blow he received at Chancellorsville, "had been almost continually alternating between sleep and stupor," during which his staff had written and sent off the despatches which left Sedgwick in doubt as to what was expected of him and what he should do. Fortunately, however, Lee was as much in doubt as his opponent, and the afternoon "wore away in skirmishing for information and getting into position." One writer says that after a personal examination of Sedgwick's position, Lee gave orders to "break in his centre . . . defeat the two wings . . . and scatter the whole force," but the better view is that his plan was to crush Sedgwick's left and drive him in the general direction of the Plank road, and thus prevent him from forming a junction with Hooker.

Be all this as it may, it was not till 5.30 P. M. that Lee's three signal guns were fired and his troops moved to the attack. Much disjointed fighting occurred, in which Brooks and Howe on one side, with Gordon, Posey and Perry on the other, took part, and the Federal line was forced back step by step toward Banks's Ford, which it finally covered at night. At 10 P. M. Lee notified McLaws that he couldn't find any of the enemy south of the Plank road, but if left alone till morning they would be found again intrenched. He therefore wished to push them over the river that night. At 11.50 P. M. Sedgwick reported his army as "hemmed in upon the slope covered by the guns from the north side of Banks's Ford," adding

that if he had only his "own army to care for he would withdraw it to-night," and then after asking if Hooker's operations required that he should jeopard everything by holding on where he was, he closed with the ominous declaration that "an immediate reply is indispensable or I may feel obliged to withdraw." But Hooker's mental paralysis continued. All day long, still holding command of his 75,000 men, the sound of Sedgwick's guns ringing in their ears, he made no move, but held in check behind his fortifications bristling with cannon and swarming with men, he waited supinely for Stuart to attack him, or for Sedgwick to attack Stuart.

But that is not the end of the ignoble story. At midnight, May 4-5, Hooker had strength and mind enough to assemble all his corps commanders except Sedgwick, who was too far away, and Slocum, who was late in arriving, for a consultation in his tent, and after setting forth the condition of affairs and expressing a lack of confidence in the steadiness of a part of his troops, he gave his generals to understand that he was personally in favor of withdrawing to the north bank of the Rappahannock. After prejudging the case in this manner, he presented to their consideration the question whether the army should advance or withdraw. This done, he and Butterfield retired. Meade, Reynolds and Howard favored an advance. Couch advised an attack if he could choose the point of attack, but wanted, as a condition precedent, to know if Hooker would be in command and how he proposed to operate.

Sickles, modestly distrusting his lack of experience as a soldier, presented reasons for retiring. At that juncture Hooker returned and gave it as his decided opinion that he could withdraw the army without loss of men or material, and this satisfying Couch that Hooker would be in command whichever way the army moved, he joined Sickles for withdrawal. The vote, therefore, stood three to two for advance, whereupon Hooker announced that he should take upon himself the responsibility of withdrawing to the north side of the river, and immediately issued the necessary orders to that end. Designating the Fifth Corps to act as rear guard he at first insisted that the Sixth Corps should hold its position on the south bank of the river, but vacillating to the end, at 1 A. M., he orderd Sedgwick to withdraw; at 1.20 A. M. he countermanded that order, but the despatch was delayed en route till 2.30 A. M., at which hour nearly the whole of Sedgwick's force, as well as most of Hooker's artillery, had recrossed the river. The night was dark and rainy, the river rose rapidly, the trenches were flooded, and the roads became almost impassable for the mud, but withal, the entire crossing was finished without accident or unusual delay, the last bridge taken up and the old camps reoccupied by an early hour next day.

XV.

Of course, the facts of this disgraceful campaign and the still more disgraceful retreat, in spite of all

precautions, slowly found their way to Washington and to the country at large. A feeling of consternation gradually spread abroad, but the depressing force of the catastrophe cannot be fully understood even now without a few lines explaining the utter mismanagement of the cavalry.

It will be remembered that Stoneman, an old regular, was in chief command of that arm. Leaving but one small brigade under Pleasanton, with Hooker, he crossed the Rappahannock with two divisions on April 29, but bivouacked that night at Madden, less than five miles to the front. The next day he marched to Raccoon Ford on the Rapidan, and after crossing to the south side he made a fireless bivouac, where he remained till daylight, and then took up the march to Verdierville, on the Fredericksburg and Orange plank road, about fifteen miles west of Chancellorsville. At that road-crossing he divided his command, sending Gregg ahead some twenty miles to Louisa Court House, on the Virginia Central railroad, while he followed in the same direction at a more leisurely pace, with headquarters, one brigade, the artillery and the train. Averell had been left hopelessly in the rear, with orders to drive back W. H. F. Lee, to burn bridges and to disable the railroad north of Gordonsville, none of which he succeeded in doing.

At 3 A. M., May 3, Gregg reached Louisa Court House, and finding no enemy, set about breaking the railroad, which he did effectually for a stretch of five miles. Stoneman arrived at the same place a few

hours later, but instead of pushing east to Hanover Junction on the railroad to Lee's rear, as his orders required, he took post at Thompson's Cross Roads, where he divided his force into raiding parties against Columbia, the James River Canal, Ashland, Hungary Station and Hanover Court House for the purpose of burning railroad trestles and bridges and spreading alarm throughout the country generally. With his 4,000 men well in hand he could easily have torn up the railroad on which Lee depended, as far north as Guiney Station, and after destroying the depot of supplies, artillery parks and wagon trains, all of which he would have found there, he could have swung to the northwest and rejoined the right of Hooker's army, where he was so badly needed. At Thompson's Cross Roads he was within thirty-five miles of Chancellorsville, and distinctly heard the roar of distant artillery without ever a thought of riding in the direction from which it came.

It is now certain that Richmond was also at his mercy had he marched upon it with his whole force, but no militiaman could have been more negligent of the true principles of war nor more lost to the opportunities before him. His fatuity and incompetence were as conspicuous as those of Hooker, and nothing worse can be said. His raiding parties, while displaying much gallantry and enterprise, and costing several valuable officers, did the enemy no serious or permanent injury. Several of them became completely detached and sought safety from pursuit by riding be-

tween rivers down to the Chesapeake and seeking the cover of the gunboats. It was this which gave color to the report from Richmond that "the enemy was everywhere."

But in the midst of the excitement of which he was the principal cause, Stoneman himself became alarmed, and on the evening of May 5, after a council of war, started north by the route he used in coming south, leaving his detachments, great and small, to find their way to the main body as best they could. Rain coming on, the return was slow, but by night marching and great precaution he succeeded in uniting with Buford at Orange Springs. On May 6, about noon, he first heard through the negroes of the country that Hooker had been repulsed and had withdrawn to the north bank of the Rappahannock. While he did not know how much of this to believe, he pushed on, making another all-night march through harder rains, greater darkness and muddier roads than the night before, but as no one was pursuing or molesting him his extreme hurry seems to have been unnecessary. On May 7 he recrossed the Rapidan at Raccoon Ford, after which he gave his men and horses the first real rest they had for a week. The next day he recrossed the Rappahannock unfollowed and unmolested and marched to Bealton, where he halted for the night. On the 11th he returned to his old camp with the army and reported in person to Hooker, but that officer, smarting under the disgrace of his own defeat and anxious to find scapegoats, however small, gave him anything but a cordial reception.

Finally, it must be said, that both Stoneman and Averell not only disregarded their instructions, but failed to avail themselves of the ample opportunities offered them to strike a vital blow at the Confederacy either at Guiney Station or at Richmond, or both. Or had Stoneman, even without Averell, formed a junction with Howard at Wilderness Tavern, he would at least have been in position to discover Jackson's turning movement in time to prevent or modify the overwhelming disaster which followed it.

It is claimed in Stoneman's behalf that he was suffering from hemorrhoids during his entire campaign and was, therefore, disqualified for such an important command, but he had Buford and Gregg, both far abler men, with him, and with credit to himself, he might have turned the responsibilities over to either with great advantage to the service.

The author, having been a cavalryman himself, concludes his account of the cavalry operations with many appropriate comments and reflections, but he might have added that the most valuable lesson they should have taught, especially to the younger men, was that the true policy in regard to that arm is to use it in masses in close connection and co-operation with the main army, and to send it on raids only in overwhelming numbers. He might have concluded with the reflection that, as cavalry and mounted infantry are the only parts of a modern army that can double their average marching speed for days at a time, the true rule should be not only to keep them at the high-

est state of efficiency, but to increase their proportionate strength to the other arms to the greatest number that can be kept properly mounted and maintained. These are the only means by which an attacking force can, with absolute certainty, place itself on the flank, rear or communications of the enemy.

XVI.

The losses of the Army of the Potomac, out of a total strength of 133,868, were 17,278, or thirteen per cent., killed, wounded and missing, the heaviest percentage of which fell on the Third, Twelfth and Eleventh Corps in the order named. The active part of the cavalry lost 389 men, or only four per cent. The Federals also lost seventeen colors.

The victorious Army of Northern Virginia, with a total effective strength of 60,892, lost 12,821, or twenty-two per cent., killed, wounded and missing. Besides, each army lost two generals killed outright or mortally wounded. The Confederate army lost fifteen colors and four per cent. of its cavalry.

This admirable work constitutes the most complete account ever given of any battle mentioned in American history, and this is as it should be, for the ample reason that the official records prepared and published by the War Department contain every official report that ever came into its possession, and these supplemented by personal memoirs, narratives and private correspondence, make Major Bigelow's work one of extraordinary

interest and completeness. The multitude of circumstances, historical references and personal narratives more than anything else, except an occasional failure in describing movements to indicate the point from which they started as well as the points at which they ended, make it difficult at times to follow the narrative even with its excellent maps constantly before the reader.

But it has been well said that history's proper province is to deal with the things which actually happened rather than those which did not happen. The latter are within the province of speculation, and in military matters are left to the Art of War and its established maxims. The campaign under consideration, while it must be admitted that its results were far from conclusive, involved the violation of every established strategical principle, whether coming from Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar or Napoleon. It is well known that those great masters agree in defining the essential rules of war in all ages substantially, as follows:

1. To keep the army in the field united.

Hooker divided his at the start.

2. To assume the initiative and keep it at all stages of the campaign.

Hooker lost his at Chancellorsville at the end of the first stage.

3. To move on the principal objective of the campaign, by a single line of operations, or by routes surely uniting before the enemy can possibly prevent it.

Hooker sent the principal part of his army by a roundabout route, to his right, leaving the lesser part

behind to move later to the left, and never succeeded in reuniting them till both had been defeated, by a force occupying a central position to both.

4. To cover all approaches to your position so as not to be specially vulnerable at any.

Hooker left his right unguarded and exposed to an overwhelming flank attack.

5. To move rapidly and surely on all important points.

Hooker moved slowly and uncertainly on all.

6. To concentrate all the forces before the battle, for as Rawlins, Grant's Chief of Staff, used to say, if you can't beat the enemy with all your troops, you surely can't do it with a part of them; therefore, take all.

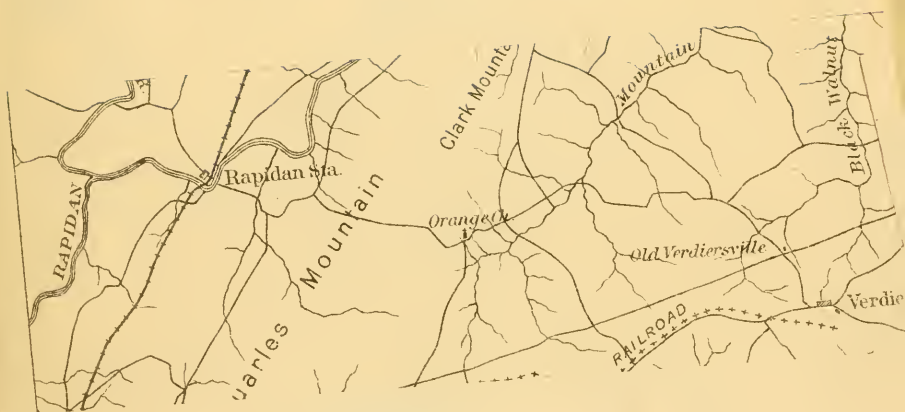
Hooker did not concentrate his, till both wings of his army had been driven from the field, and even then did not fight, although about a third of his men had not fired a shot, and he still had twice as many as the enemy.

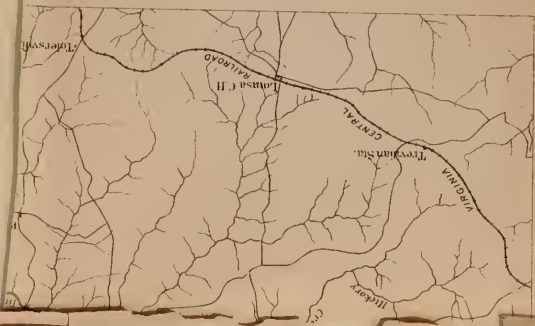
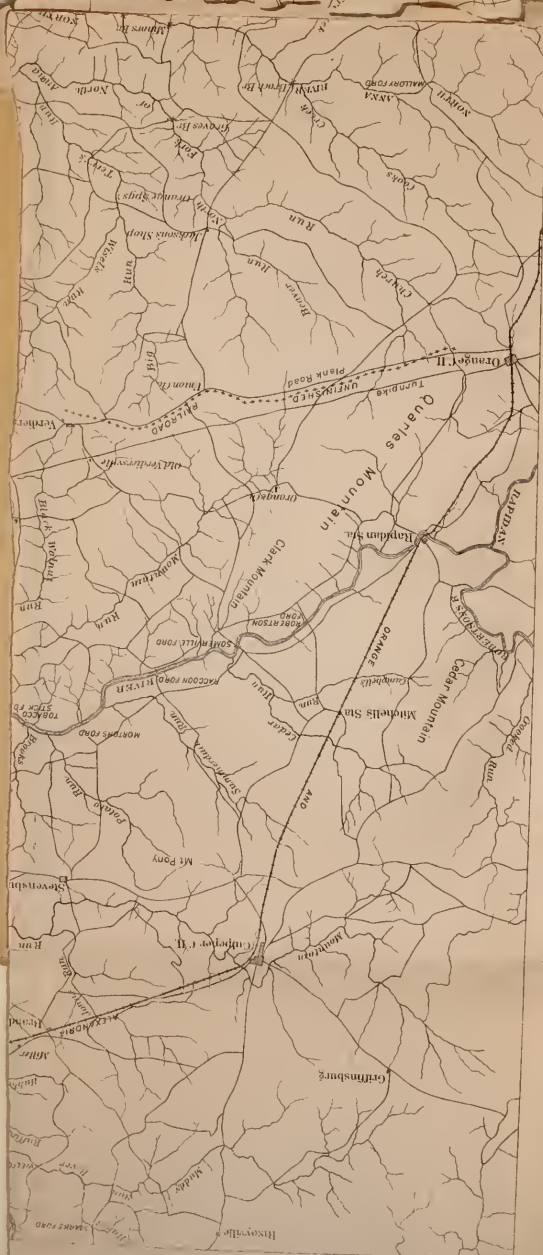
Besides, many other principles of organization, logistics, administration, strategy and tactics, pointed out by Major Bigelow, were flagrantly neglected or violated, but to recount them all would require an entire volume. This is merely a review.

It may be summed up, in conclusion, that Hooker should have marched faster and concentrated his army, including his cavalry, south of Banks's Ford, west of Fredericksburg, either at Chancellorsville or Salem Church. With this done he should have pushed with

all his might for Guiney Station and Lee's railroad, as Grant did for Spottsylvania and Lee's depots a year later. If in doing this, Hooker, in the words of Napoleon, had marched ten leagues, fought a great battle, and pursued the enemy ten leagues, he would have gained a great victory, showed himself to be a great commander, and possibly would have ended the war at least a year sooner than it was ended.

The able work concludes with a number of appendices and as many pages of judicious comments and reflections, which cannot be too highly commended to military administrators and legislators as well as to students of the art of war.







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